

A Chance to Serve Act

Congressman Andy Kim

Service provides Americans the opportunity to interact with others across lines of race, class, region, and ideology. During moments of crisis, national service programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, Peace Corps, and AmeriCorps recruited Americans to serve. Congressman Andy Kim (NJ-03) is proud to introduce legislation to supercharge national service by creating more opportunities to serve and improving benefits for volunteers during and after their service.

A Chance to Serve Act includes the following provisions:

- Increases AmeriCorps funding to expand the number of positions from 250,000 to 500,000.
- Increases the AmeriCorps living allowance, tying it to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), and exempts it from federal income taxes.
- Doubles the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award provided to AmeriCorps members and exempts it from federal income tax. Under this plan, a full-time volunteer would receive nearly \$13,000, which could be used to pay educational expenses for a short-term credential and a college degree.
- Makes AmeriCorps members and Peace Corps Volunteers eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness and suspends student loan payments and interest accrual throughout their service.
- Expands healthcare benefits for AmeriCorps members and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs). After completing their service, RPCVs would be eligible to receive hospital and medical care through a local VA health facility for one year. AmeriCorps volunteers would be allowed to remain enrolled in the AmeriCorps VISTA Health Benefit Plan at no cost for one year after their service. This is a period of transition when many volunteers are currently without healthcare coverage.
- Extends Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) status awarded to AmeriCorps members and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers after completing their service from one year to three years. This extension will allow volunteers greater flexibility to consider a long-term career in government service and help the federal government maximize recruitment from this highly-qualified talent pool.
- Increases the Readjustment Allowance for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers from \$125 to \$375 for each month of service completed and exempts it from federal income taxes. Volunteers use this funding for to assist returned Volunteers in their transition from Peace Corps service to other endeavors.
- Ensures Peace Corps Volunteers receive their monthly stipends on a consistent schedule throughout their service, including in the event of a government shutdown.
- Provides the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) the authority to offer planning grants to community-based organizations and waive their matching requirements for the first two years. Providing these flexibilities to CNCS will develop new grantee on-ramps for organizations that serve underserved communities.
- Allows individuals with legal migrant status to serve as AmeriCorps members or Peace Corps Volunteers.